

## **Curb Your Enthusiasm**

The lively excitable child who has a hard time sitting still, paying attention or often talking out of turn, is told time and time again by parents and teachers to tone it down! The constant need for re-direction can wear down both parents and teachers. Often times a person is identified with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) in grades 1,4,7 and College mainly by a teacher's suspicion. The many children and adults who have ADHD are still, after all this time, misunderstood in society as people seem to be frustrated by their enthusiasm for life..

The reason why ADHD is around today, as it was 20 or 30 years ago, is because it does travel in families! If you as a parent had poor attention problems or were given the diagnosis of ADHD, there is a likely chance that one of your children will have it too. ADHD covers the life span. ADHD looks different as the child develops. Young children are very active, excitable, intuitive and sassy! They demonstrate a zest for life and love surprises, birthdays and other celebrations. They have a hard time curbing their enthusiasm when excited about an idea, toy or activity in the classroom. They are NOT children who go out of their way to be bad or misbehave. An adolescent may have more of an internal restlessness, like a need to get things done and or feel more irritable. Parents often respond with feeling their teen is careless or a procrastinator. It is common for the adolescent who has ADHD to struggle with having a future goal and executing a plan to its completion. Offering your teen a life coach or vocational testing can be a valuable experience for them to pursue their dreams like their peers. The adult who has been able to follow their passion is often self-employed so is doing more than one job or activity during the day, or has found their way into an exciting career where there is stimulation for them to thrive. For example, positions that involve marketing, creating or inventing, or working in a hospital emergency room! People with ADHD are often "ideas" people and can think fast on their feet.

In basic terms, ADHD is a function of the person's brain having problems with filtering out stimulation. The brain is not able to focus on just one thing. ADHD is also an inhibitory control problem, where the person has an urge that won't go away and they act

impulsively to satisfy their “I want now” desire. Therefore the person with ADHD cannot feel the “NO” word internally. They do things sometimes without thinking, which is when their impulsive behaviour causes them grief. What parents and teachers need to remember is that children with ADHD are not bad children, but have a biological malfunction that drives them to satiate their desires. Some of the intensity of your child’s impulsiveness will lesson over time.

Children with ADHD can be described as an ever ready battery! They have an extra amount of energy, often take a long period of time to settle down to sleep and night and wake up early amazingly refreshed to have another exciting day. Often parents tell me that their child couldn’t have ADHD because they can play video games or play with their toys for hours! Most of us can concentrate for hours if we are doing something we love. Children with ADHD are attracted to games that stimulate their brain at a high frequency level which is why I believe video games are attractive to them.

There is a lot of controversy over the use of medications that help people with ADHD. It is important to be properly assessed by a physician or psychiatrist to understand ADHD, its associated behaviours and what you can do to help your family members. It is also important to understand the how, what and why medicines are considered. My own personal theory from working with people of all ages with ADHD is pretty simple, if medicine will improve the quality of your child’s life (educational and social), then it is worth considering. Stimulant medications have been tested now for over 60 years, one of the longest yet! They serve a specific function to help filter extraneous stimulation and do not alter one’s personality. After all, we all love being around someone who is lively, creative and full of great ideas!

A great resource for people wanting to know more about ADHD can be found at CHADD [www.chadd.org/](http://www.chadd.org/) (Children and Adults with Attention Deficit/ Hyperactivity Disorder)

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